

EDUCATION AND CULTURE

Volume-II

Editor

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Role of Teachers to Preserve and Enrich the Culture through Education: Need of the Hour <i>Shree Chatterjee</i>	79
Festivals: An Expression of our Rhythmic Planet <i>Dr. Shramana Chattopadhyay and Poulomi Talukdar</i>	92
Effects of Education on Cultural Development- Past, Present, and Future <i>Joyita Mitra</i>	109
Indian Culture and Education: Past and Present <i>Sudip Ghoshal</i>	119
Education and Cultural Development-Issues and Perspectives: A Study on Cultural Development and Their Effectiveness in Our Society <i>Rakhi Maity</i>	128

DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY

Women's Education and Culture in Traditional Creativity in India <i>Dr. Debasish Debnath</i>	143
Effluxion of Education and Culture in Ancient India <i>Akbar Ali</i>	156
Growth of Private Medical College in India and Adverse impact of globalization in the domain of Higher Education. <i>Dr. Amrita Bagchi</i>	166
Lights on Nawab Faizunnessa Chawdhurani (1834- 1904) <i>Anamitra Bhattacharyya</i>	178
'Women education and empowerment in colonial Bengal'. <i>Asit Kar</i>	184

Festivals: A Connotation of our Creative Unity

Dr Shramana Chattopadhyay* and Poulomi Talukdar**

ABSTRACT : Festivals promote equality in diversity, brings neighbours into congregation of happiness. Festivals endorse cultural exchanges and improve society's general psychological wellbeing. Rabindranath Tagore is one who realized that social alliance can be the inner strength of the progression of humanity. Tagore always wanted to encourage the creative self of person. According to him, the very notion of creativity is the "surplus" for our divine soul which connects one to the world. The consciousness of our personality reveals as mass awareness and reflects prominently distinct with the colour of our emotions. Rabindranath Tagore proposed whole lot various types of festivals capturing multiplicities and diversities of creation. As an unprejudiced person, Tagore valued all aspects of human creation through festivals. Conventionally, festivals are community specific, always celebrated by communities to practice ritualistic or religious activities. But Tagore's understanding of festival speaks a different tale of our life. He encourages creativity as well as its application. In every aspect of Tagore's philosophy, abstraction and concreteness set out hand to hand. Here, we see four types of festival to celebrate in Santiniketan and Sriniketan.

1. *RITU UTSAV (seasonal festival)*
2. *NABAPARJAYER UTSAV (occasional festival)*
3. *SMARANOTSAV (festival in remembrance)*
4. *BICHITRA PARJAYER UTSAV (miscellaneous festival)*

Festivals always have an educational value where our knowledge of understanding becomes alive and vibrant. Scope of pragmatic and utilitarian aspect reflects as universal knowledge. Here, we want to illustrate how different festivals enrich the educational system.

Keywords : Festival, Rituar, Creation, Community

Education and its conventional method were not very pleasant experience in Tagore's upbringing which reflects in the pages of his autobiography- "*Jibonsmriti*". The conventional mechanical system of education and its unattractive learning process made him anxious to build up a new educational

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infrastructure. Rabindranath was particularly concerned about the purpose of education and its process of learning. In 1892, he gave a lecture on education in the Rajshahi Association at Shilaidaha. Later this speech was published as '*Shikkhar Herfer*', where he stated that education is always as backbone of nation. We know that if we do not give enough water to the root, a tree cannot flourish. Likewise Rabindranath took the responsibility to exhibit the true meaning of education. Tagore crafted a methodology for education to help a man to become a good human being. This search was not limited as an idea. In December 1901, he started a small school with five children which later formed as Visva-Bharati University. Rabindranath Tagore was not a professional educationalist, although he expressed very valuable opinion about education through his sensible thinking. Indicating the defects of the prevailing traditional education system, he proposed the changes required therein. His essential objective of education is independence of mankind. Independence elevates people to that level where they can truly feel their own transcendent self. It was disturbing to see any kind of subjection of man. So, he repeatedly condemned the imposed politics and imposed education system.

Education is the seed of human life. As adequate light and air helps grow a seed into plantation, likewise Tagore thought that child education needs a proper atmosphere for the growth of child's selfhood. But main stream education went completely in the reversed direction. Going up against the contemporary educational system, Rabindranath raised his voice against the brutality of British culture and its custom. Rabindranath Tagore wrote "...I try to make provision for these aspect of freedom- freedom of mind, freedom of heart and freedom of will." (*Thoughts on education, R. Tagore*) This is the core thinking of Tagore's education. It is our responsibility to give a free environment to grow up the children of our society. If education does not help to cultivate free mind, free will, and free vision to observe the world, the backbone of mankind will collapse. According to Rabindranath, school is not a place to satisfy the small interests, to drive the students towards greatness. Rabindranath Tagore wanted to create a new mould of life through education. The main objective of his education is to understand the compatibility of man's intellect, social, moral, economic and spiritual aspects in his own mind. He said "...the highest education is that which does not only give us information but makes our life in harmony with all existence."

Rabindranath Tagore found a unique way to apply the core concept of education. He was the proponent of various kinds of festivals. He thought that festivals always have an educational value where our knowledge of understanding becomes alive and vibrant. Scope of pragmatic and utilitarian aspect reflects as universal knowledge. Here, we want to illustrate how different festivals enrich the educational system.

Briksharopan (Tree plantation)

We all know the relation between the monsoon and the poet is inseparable. In respect of that two festivals were added by the poet. One is the *Briksharopan* (Tree plantation- July 21, 1928) and the other is the *Halakarshan* (Plough Festival- 22nd of July, 1928). These two festivals are part of *Barsha Mangal*. Why the poet did introduced this tree plantation program is clearly stated in his speech of 1939 *Halakarshan* festival:

‘পৃথিবীর দান গ্রহণ করবার সময় লোভ বেড়ে উঠল মানুষের। অরণ্যের হাত থেকে কৃষিক্ষেত্র জয় করে নিলে, অবশেষে কৃষিক্ষেত্রের একাধিপত্য অরণ্যকে হঠিয়ে দিতে লাগল। নানা প্রয়োজনে গাছ কেটে কেটে পৃথিবীর ছায়া বস্ত্রহরণ করে তাকে দিতে লাগল নগ্ন করে। তাতে তার বাতাসকে করতে লাগল উত্তপ্ত, মাটি উর্বর তার ভাণ্ডার দিতে লাগল নিঃস্ব করে। অরণ্যের-আশ্রয়-হারা আর্ষ্যবর্ত আজ তাই খর সূর্যতাপে দুঃসহ।

এইকথা মনে রেখে কিছুদিন পূর্বে আমরা যে অনুষ্ঠান করেছিলুম সে হচ্ছে বৃক্ষরোপণ, অপব্যয়ী সন্তান-কর্তৃক লুপ্তিত মাতৃভাণ্ডার পূরণ করবার কল্যাণ-উৎসব।’

Shantiniketan with its surroundings was a deserted land without any plantation/tree with red pebble arid land. Poet felt the necessity of filling and beautifying the terrain with the tree, plantation & flowers with introducing tree plantation festival:

‘মানুষ ঘন্যভাবে প্রকৃতির দান গ্রহণ করেছে; প্রকৃতির সহজ দানে কুলাইনি, তাই সে নির্মমভাবে বনকে নির্মূল করেছে। তার ফলে আবার- মরুভূমিকে ফিরিয়ে আনবার উদ্যোগ হয়েছে। ভূমির ক্রমিক ক্ষয়ে এই যে বোলপুর ডাঙ্গার কঙ্কাল বেরিয়ে পড়েছে, বিনাশ অগ্রসর হয়ে এসেছে- এক সময়ে এর এমন দশা ছিল না; এখানে ছিল অরণ্য সে পৃথিবীকে রক্ষা করেছে ধ্বংসের হাত থেকে, তার ফলমূল খেয়ে মানুষ বেঁচেছে। সেই অরণ্য নষ্ট হওয়ায় এখন বিপদ আসন্ন। সেই বিপদ থেকে রক্ষা পেতে হলে আবার আমাদের আহ্বান করতে হবে সেই বরদাত্রী বনলক্ষ্মীকে আবার তিনি রক্ষা করণ এই ভূমিকে, দিন তাঁর ফল, দিন তাঁর ছায়া।’

The first tree-plantation festival was held on 21st July 1928 (5th Sraban

1335) at Gourprangan of Santiniketan Ashram. and. On this occasion, a *Bakul* tree was planted there.

On 25th July the poet wrote to the daughter-in-law, in a letter:

"Tree plantation programme is done with the Bakul tree of your tub. You cannot imagine such a good luck of any tree in the world. The beautiful well dressed girls were singing and blowing conch accompanied the tree. Shastri (Bidhusekhar) recited Sanskrit verse - I read one by one 5 poems."

In the presence of poet, on 26th Shravan tree plantation festival was held in Santiniketan in 1929. A few days before, Tagore wrote tree plantation song for the festival, the main theme of the song was an affection to take care of the baby trees -

‘আয় আমাদের অঙ্গনে অতিথি বালক তরুদল,
মানব স্নেহ সঙ্গনে, চল আমাদের ঘর চল
শ্যাম বঙ্কিম ভঙ্গিতে চঞ্চল কলসঙ্গীতে
দ্বারে নিয়ে আয় শাখায় শাখায় প্রাণ-আনন্দ-কোলাহল।।
দেপবনেবনবল্লভে মর্মর গীত উপহার।
আজি শ্রাবণের বর্ষণে আশীর্বাদের স্পর্শনে
পড়ুক মাথায় পাতায় পাতায় অমরাবতীর ধারা জল।।’

In 1930, Acharya Dinendranath Tagore led the music of this year's tree plantation festival. One *Amlaki* tree was planted in front of Shribhavan. Bidhushekhar Shastri read the appropriate Sanskrit verse for the ceremony. In the evening, recitation, vocal music and presentation of musical instruments took place in Uttarayan Compound. On 15 August 1935, due to bad weather tree plantation ceremony was happened at 3-30p.m. instead of 7.30 a.m morning. Acharya Kshitimohan planted five coconut trees in the compound. In 1937, tree plantation festival was organized in Santal Palli near Santiniketan. Under the leadership of the poet and with the recitation of verse by Kshitimohan Sen. In 3rd September 1938, the tree plantation ceremony of Sriniketan was held in the presence of the poet. Poet presented in his brief lecture on what is the purpose of the tree plantation and the festival of Halkarshan. This speech has been found in the book

"Palli Prakriti" with the title 'forest deity'. In this manner the poet's tree plantation festival is going in Santiniketan. The *Barshamangal* and tree plantation festival earlier use to be held on the same day. Now 'Barshamangal' festival is held after a few days of tree plantation festival. After the death of poet (1941), tree plantation is being held on 22nd Shravan on the death Anniversary of Poet.

This festival is currently held at the Vishwa Bharti barren places or the newly built neighbourhood. In the selected place, 25-30 feet length and breadth square area is cleaned with soil and cow dung, digging about 18 inch square hole in the middle of the area, where tree will be planted. The area around the hole is beautifully decorated with *Alpana*(Designs). On the day, at appropriate time, two well-groomed young people carry a baby tree in palanquin, decorated by artists of the Kalavaban along with musical procession. They sing:

‘মরুবিজয়ের কেতন উড়াও শূণ্যে হে প্রবল প্রাণ।
 ধূলিরে ধন্য করো করুনার পূণ্যে হে কোমন প্রাণ।।
 মৌনী মাটির মর্মের গান কবে উঠিবে ধ্বনিয়া মর্মর তব রবে;
 মাধুরী ভরিবে ফুলে ফলে পল্লবে হে মহান প্রাণ।।
 পথিক বন্ধু, ছায়ার আসন পাতি এস শ্যাম সুন্দর।
 এসো বাতাসের অধীর খেলার সাথি, মাতাও নিলম্বর।
 উষায় জাগাও শাখায় গানের আশা, সন্ধ্যায় আনো বিরাম গভীর ভাষা,
 রচি দাও তাতে সুপ্ত গীতের বাসা হে উদার প্রাণ।।’

Various flowers, sandalwood, incense, lamps and various types of *Mangalic* products are kept in the ceremony. Plant being carried by the palanquin and then Chief Guest of the festival places the plant in the ground at the specified hole. Then the soil is given, the water is sprayed, it is aired with hand fan made of pulm leave and the fire is touched. In this way, the help of earth, water, fire, air and sky i.e. *Panchavuta* is provided. The Vedamantra is recited in loud voice.

In the nearby five children, nicely dressed, sit on a well decorated stage - they are the symbols of each bhuta or element. One by one they recite

hymn on earth, water, fire, air and sky. These hymns represent *Panchavuta*, so that this child tree becomes a fully grown tree giving flower, fruits and leaves for the welfare of human society. Several appropriate songs are sung in the festival.

Halakarshan (Plough festival)

Along with “Tree Plantation”, Rabibdranath made “*Halakarshan*” also a festive programme on agricultural knowledge and agricultural education in Sriniketan. The festival of *Halakarshan*, on one hand, identifies his scientific knowledge, while on the other side commemorates his artistic sense. In a speech given on the occasion of *Halakarshan*-tree plantation held in Sriniketan, the poet said, “*Today’s festival has two parts. First Halakarshan-plough we need for the food, for grains; for perform our duty to ourselves be Halakarshan. But by doing this we insult Basundhara and to prevent that we should give something back. For doing duties to the earth, we organize this tree plantation to prevent its wounds. I wish due to this festival tree shades should be widen and grains are embellished with the surrounding and get relief. “*

On February 6, 1922, Palli Sangathan Bibhag was established in Sriniketan near Surul village. When the poet was in the work of managing the zamindari in Shilaidah, he observed the misfortune of the general public. Then he began to look for ways for its remedy. He easily understood that the progress of agriculture can bring the welfare of the countrymen. But the educated society of the country is indifferent towards the welfare of the village.

A quarterly magazine called *Bhumilakshmi* (ভূমিলক্ষ্মী) use to be published in Birbhum. In Bengali calendar 1331 the management of this journal came to Visva-Bharati and started to publish as a monthly letter. Regarding this magazine, the poet writes-

“... আমাদের দেশের চাষের ক্ষেত্রের উপর সমস্ত পৃথিবীর জ্ঞানের আলো ফেলিবার দিন আসিয়াছে। আজ শুধু একলা চাষীর চাষ করিবার দিন নাই, আজ তাহার সঙ্গে বিদ্বানকে, বৈজ্ঞানিককে যোগ দিতে হইবে। আজ শুধু চাষীর লাঙলের ফলার সঙ্গে আমাদের দেশের মাটির সংযোগ যথেষ্ট নয় সমস্ত দেশের বুদ্ধির সঙ্গে, বিদ্যার সঙ্গে অধ্যবসার সঙ্গে তাহার সংযোগ হওয়া চাই। এই কারণে বীরভূম জেলা হইতে এই যে ‘ভূমিলক্ষ্মী’ কাগজখানি বাহির হইয়াছে ইহাতে উৎসাহ অনুভব করিতেছি। বস্তুত লক্ষ্মীর সঙ্গে সরস্বতীকে না মিলাইয়া দিলে আজকালকার দিনে ভূমিলক্ষ্মীর যথার্থ সাধনা হইতে পারিবে না।”

Ploughing and Farming is shameful job for considerable period-it is work of Shudra (lower caste), although the ancient epic Ramayana of ancient India is indeed a "Krsihi Kavya" i.e. "Agricultural poetic work". Even when Aryans entered India, there was no enterprise of agriculture in the country's virgin soil. The Aryans first rescued the virgin land from the hands of the monsters. The land gradually became grainy and royal. Agriculture extended from Bideha to Panchabati. The King Janaka got Sita by ploughing. The poet said in 1346 in relation to the Plough - "The great importance of the agricultural knowledge felt by Arya Samaj at that time is evident in Ramayana. Sita got her impersonation during ploughing, and Rama convert the virgin land into cultivable. One day, this ploughing penetrated the forest and mountain and made India's north meet south.

Buddha Purnima

Poet Rabindranath was the worshiper of human religion. He has completely gave up his respect and devotion to the religion wherever he found the world's welfare, happiness and peace is present and where there has been the tune of universalism-worldly love. The Buddhist ideology entered the Tagore family before birth of Rabindranath. In 1859, Maharshidev's son Satyendranath and Keshab Chandra Sen went to Singhal. Since then, Buddha's ideology was practiced in Tagore family in different way.

Regarding Lord Buddha in the article 'Buddhadev', he wrote, "*Lord Buddha one day after leaving the estate was started to meditation. The meditation was with the determination of bringing down sadness of all the people.*" Was in this meditation there were any differentiation in right? Was there any lower caste? Was there any Non-Aryan? He left all his belongings for the poorest, illiterate people. In his meditation there was respect for all people of all country without any reservation. The poet use to become very emotional about Buddhadeb. He believed that Buddha was the greatest human. He first time went to the Buddha Gaya, a place rich with memory of Buddha, on 8 October 1904. At that time he stayed there for few days. The poet had many companions on this journey. From the letter written by Srishchandra Majumdar, it is known that the companion was Jagdish Chandra Bose, his wife, Sister Nivedita, Sister Christine, Lalu (Brajendra Kishore Devbarma), Jaty, Santosh Chandra, Rathindranath and Srishchandra. Two daughters of Jadunath Sarkar and Ananda Mohan Basu later joined the team.

Second time he went there in 1914, and stayed there for three days- in this trip Barama Hemlata was with him. From the book 'Rabindranath in the memory of women', written by her, it is known that the poet used to stay in Buddha Mandir for two to three hours alone. He used to stand firm in front of the Buddha statue, with the tears flowing from his eyes. Poet wrote in his article on Buddhadev—

"One day I was in Bodhgaya for visiting the temple there of. Then this thought emerged in my mind - whose foot prints once made this earth sacred, he personally travelled this Gaya, Why did not I take birth at that time to feel his holy touch through my entire soul and body."

In 1935, the poet went to Sarnath to pay homage to the Buddha. This poem was composed by the poet in 1931 on the occasion of the establishment of a new monastery in Sarnath

ঐ নামে একদিন ধন্য হলো দেশে দেশান্তরে
তব জন্মভূমি।
সেই নাম আরবার এ দেশের নগরে প্রান্তরে
দান করো তুমি।।
বোধিদ্রুমতলে তব সেদিনের মহাজাগরণ
আবার সার্থক হোক মুক্ত হোক মোহ-আবরণ,
বিস্মৃতির রাত্রিশেষে এ ভারতে তোমার স্মরণ,
নবপ্রাতে উঠুক কুসুমি।।
চিন্তাহেথে মৃত প্রায়, অমিতাভ, তুমি অমিতায়ু,
আয়ু করো দান।
তোমার বোধন মন্ত্রে হে থাকার তন্দ্রালস বায়ু
হোক প্রাণবান।
খুলে যাক রুদ্ধদার, চৌদিকে ঘোষুক শঙ্খধ্বনি
ভারত অঙ্গন তলে আজিতবনব আগমনী,
অমেয় প্রেমের বার্তা শতকণ্ঠে উঠুক নিঃস্বনি

এনে দিক অজেয় আহান ।।

The poet established the center of Buddhism in Visva-Bharati, Professor Nityanind-Binod Goswami was sent to Shingal (Sri Lanka) and Bramhadesh (Myanmar) for higher education in Buddhist philosophy. Rathindranath wrote in his *"Pitririti"* (In the memory of father) book - "I believe, due to this Buddhagaya visit, subsequently father's internal attraction towards Buddhism and its literature became deeply intense. The poet himself went to various Asian countries and visited the pilgrimage of Lord Buddha. He travelled to China, Japan, Singhal, Brahmadesh, Shyam, Java, and realized the essence of Buddha's preaching.

The essence of Buddhism is to inspire the greatness, superior feeling, and welfare power within the human. Rabindranath is the worshiper of human religion. He was gradually attracted towards Buddhism due to similarity of his thoughts with that of Lord Buddha of Buddha. In Rabindranath's own words- *"Whom I feel in my within as greatest human being, in his birth festival on the Baisakhi Purnima day I have come to pay my homage. It is not a material ornament of any particular event; it is what I surrendered to him in confidence repeatedly."*

Rammohan Smaran (Remembering Rammohan Ray):

In the modern era touching the history in the light of Renaissance Raja Rammohan Roy is ever remembered. On the afternoon of 27th September at Santiniketan, the Rammohan Memorial Festival is celebrated with reverence.

Someone asked to Rabindranath "Who is your hero?" Rabindranath replied, 'Rammohan Roy', Maitreya Devi narrated the incident. Mahanta Rammohan Roy's first death anniversary was celebrated on 27 September 1922 in Santiniketan. But the poet was absent on the first celebration. Nepal Chandra Rai and Kshitimohan Sen were in Acharya's seat. The poem *"Chiraswaraniya"* is 'rhythmic form' of poet's infinite respect towards Ramamohan.

‘মৃত্যুঞ্জয় যাহাদের প্রাণ,

সব তুচ্ছ তার উর্ধ্বে দীপ যারা জ্বালে অনির্বাণ,

তাহাদের মাঝে যেন হয়

তোমাদের ইনিত্য পরিচয়। তাহাদের খর্বকর যদি
খর্বতার অপমানে বন্দী হয়ে রবে নিরবধি
তাদের সন্মানে মান নিয়ে
বিশ্বে যারা চিরস্মরণীয়।’

It should be mentioned that Rammahon's life was the foundation of human friendship and establishment of truth. This impression of motivation repeatedly came in the thought, sense and work of Rabindranath. Not to be confined to the small area of the country, Brahma will be seen among the people of the entire world, one has to expand himself. In fact, Rammohan showed the nation the path to the world; he gave mantra to associate with the knowledge and science of the world. He wanted to erase differentiation, ethnic narrowness, cruelty to the women. He did not get satisfaction in the bound rules of ceremonial rituals of religion. His truthfulness of mind is gift of the ancient Indian Rishis in search of infinity –Upanisad was his way of life. Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore said about Rammohan:

‘পূর্ণ মনুষ্যত্বের সর্বাঙ্গীন আকাঙ্ক্ষাকে বহন করে এদেশে রামমোহন রায়ের আবির্ভাব হয়েছিল-- ভারতবর্ষে তিনি যে কোনো নূতন ধর্মের সৃষ্টি করেছিলেন তা নয়, ভারতবর্ষে যেখানে ধর্মের মধ্যে পরিপূর্ণতার রূপ চিরদিনই ছিল যেখানে বৃহৎ সামঞ্জস্য যেখানে শান্তশিবদ্বৈতম, সেইখানকার সিংহদ্বার তিনি সর্বসাধারণের কাছে উদ্ঘাটিত করে দিয়েছিলেন।’

On September 27, every year, students, professors, employees and Ashrambasi of Santiniketan worships at Chattimtala on the occasion of Rammohan's commemoration. With Brahmasangit, recitation of mantra, a sacred atmosphere is created. On the occasion of the centenary of the death of Rammohan, the poet (1934) paid his tribute this way:

হে রামমোহন, আজি শতক বর্ষ করি পার
মিলিল তোমার নামে দেশের সকল নমস্কার।
মৃত্যু অন্তরাল ভেদি দাও তব অন্তহীনদান
যাহা কিছু জরাজীর্ণ তাহাতে জাগাও নবপ্রাণ।
যাহা কিছু মূঢ়তা হে চিন্তের পরশমণি তব
এনে দিক উদ্বোধন, এনে দিক শক্তি অভিনব।

Maharshi Smaran (Remembering Maharshi)

The worship takes place in the temple in the morning of 6th Magh in memory of Maharshi Debendranath. At 3pm, there is a memorial meeting in front of the prayer seat of Maharshi in Chhatimtala. In this meeting, the songs of Brahma Sangit and Puja echelon are sung. The selected sections are read from the writings of Maharshidev. Honour is devoted by discussing the life and work of Maharshidev.

In 1828, on 20 August, 6 Bhadra 1235, Wednesday, Brahma Samaj was established by Rammohan. Dwarakanath was a close friend of Rammohan. Debendranath thus came near Rammohan and was become attracted to him. So the holy Wednesday found place in the heart of Maharshi. In his established Ashram still prayer takes place in that temple on Wednesday.

At that time, in order to curtail the influence of some condemnable young people of Hindu College and influence of Christian missionaries, 'Tattwabodhini Pathshala' was established by Maharshidev in the first week of June 1840, in Calcutta. The purpose of setting up this school (the manner it was notified at that time) is like this: *"Accepting English language as mother tongue and Christian religion as ancestral religion,- To prevent these horrific incidents, giving education of science and religious teaching in Bengali language, giving practical and spiritual truth both types of education free of cost to the students..."*. But this school did not run in Kolkata for long. On 30 April 1843, Debendranath had set up a 'Tattwabodhini Pathshala' with the same intention in the Bansbere village.

Debendranath, was an appropriate visionary of Bengal during that period. This great man has left Santiniketan for us. This Santiniketan was a barren valley. Maharshidev saw this place on the way to Raipur. Standing in this liberal open wilderness, he could see establishment of throne of eternity. In the life of Maharishi's life there were fascination for meditation and nature. In nature he would get the touch of 'Ekamebadwitiyam' (only one without a second). Surrounded by these two *Chhatim* tree, he settled twenty bighas of land from the zamindar of Raipur. Then he placed his meditation seat below *Chhatim* tree. There he got *'comfort of life, joy of mind, peace of soul'*

Debendranath, after renovating religion, while establishing its truthful form introduced new ceremonial practice excluding paganism. Eliminating Jagyik rituals (sacred fire worship), *hom*, *narayansila* etc sacred thread

ceremony was performed for his son Rabindranath on 25th Magh 1279. In fact, Maharshi established the foundation of new awakened Bengal from superstition ridden Bengal. He did not gave away Santiniketan Ashram for a particular community. To come to Santiniketan one never has to go through of the people. The base of this monastery is built on the path of - *Shantam Shivam Adwitiam*.

Anandabazar

Prior to Puja, all the bhavans of the Visva-Bharati stages at least one drama in the "Natyaghar" (Theatre Room). Puja vacation is knocking at the door. The golden bloom of the sunlight puts tinge in the mind of the children, their mind started to look forward to their home. At the same time, on the day of Mahalaya at 3 in the afternoon, *Anandabazar* is organised which ends at 8.00 in the evening. Actually it's a fair – for just a few hours. The students of the Ashram puts up shops in the "Gour Prangan"- trading takes place. As parents and guardians comes to take their children's to home on vacation resulting in increase in the number of buyers.

From the day before the festival, collections of bamboo, cloth etc. takes place for constructing the shops. Making dolls and necklaces, drawing masks, drawings of dies, and drawing cards have long been started. The festival day gradually approaches. Tune of clarionet (Sanai) is heard from the dawn. The gong (Kansi) and drum (Dhak) starts sounding. Children begin to decorate the shops – Professors also join with them. Flower-leaf, coloured-sari, colourful paper are accessories to decorate shops. By putting one jar above another, and drawing on them a fine arcade is constructed and the decorations of the shops are completed by noon.

"Gaur Prangan" is now non recognisable. The Circus Tent is in the middle. The owner of the Circus is students of the "Kalavaban". Elephants, horses, lions, tigers, bear all are there in circus. Acting of Drama is being held in "Sinha Sadan". Tickets are being sold here also. In the convenience store floral dresses are being sold. Beautiful floral ornaments are made by putting red 'Rangan' flower (রঙ্গন-Jungle Geranium) and bud of white 'Tagor' flower (টগর- crape Jesmine) on the leaves of Jackfruit. String made of Fir seeds and "Sandhyamoni" (সন্ধ্যামনি-4 O'clock flower plant) seeds are being sold. Small children are selling prepared betel leaf moving around in the fair. A boy or

a girl of Kalavaban may be seated there with white card and pencil. If you stand in front of them they will draw a sketch of yours and will ask money for that; someone may write poem or rhyme in your name and giving it to you they will ask money.

Many funny events took place in Anandabazar. In the food shop tea, coffee, different type of snaks like ghugni, chop, beguni, peyanji, alukabli, and sweets are sold. The variety of name of things and variety of shops attracts buyers. At 8 o'clock in the night, the lights were disconnected and signal is given to close the shops. Selling should stop at 8-30. That day, it is tradition that after calculating profit & loss, the profit amount needs to be deposited to the "Daridra Bhandar" (Poverty fund) of welfare branch of employees of Viswa Bharati.

Through this fair, many tasks are held which helped children to be emotionally strong and skilled. Through this children's creative power, taste of beauty is developed, also managing and accounting capacity is practiced and they learned the ability to work together. By donating profit to welfare branch power of sacrifice is increased.

Nandan Mela

Santiniketan's Kalabhaban is the place of worship of Shilpacharyya Nandalal. Nandalal's involvement was quite long in the history of Kalabhaban. Thats why naturally the student and professor of Kalabhana all perceive the birthday of Nandalal as a memorable day. Nandalal was born on December 3, 1883. On December 3, in the early morning students of Kalabhaban use to sing (*Baitalik*) while going around a part of the Ashram. Then the student and professors used to go out together for *Banabhojan* (বনভোজন-picnic). All day spent rejoicing. In this way, the birthday of Shilpacharya became a festive day to the students and professors of Kalabhaban.

There cannot be any action without reason. In 1972, problem relating to arranging financial help for a student of Kalavaban, who met with an unexpected accident, made all to think about. Absence of a permanent fund was strongly felt. Just then, at that time only, Nandalal's Birthday Celebration Festival, 'Baroda Art Fair', creation of perpetual fund all lead to the birth of *Silpa Mela*. The main objective was to create a permanent fund for dealing with accidents and bad days.

The first fair was held at the Kalavaban in 1973. Then its name was 'Nanda Mela'. The next year, 1974 it was named as '*Nandan Mela*'. This offended some students and professors. Rabindranath Tagore's named Kalavaban workshop as '*Nandan*'. Workshop '*Nandan*' gave pleasure to Karmaveer (champion of work) Nandalal in his whole life. Therefore, in the name of Shilpacharya or in the name of his creation or whether it is in the name of arts, leaving these argument it can be said that this fair is a popular festival of Visva-Bharati.

Various types of items of handicrafts are displayed in the fair, such as idols, dolls, toys, painted dies, paintings, photos, calendar, congratulations letter, brass jewellery, blouse pieces with batik work, scarf, vanity bag, appliqué work etc. There are also tea and food shops. Tickets are sold for Acting of play and variety entertainment programmes. The fair compound are beautifully decorated. This decoration consists of art and beauty. Students are engaged in various ways in preparing for this fair and their professional skills are developed for making different types of saleable products. This gives an opportunity to the students to come close to their professors and gets the opportunity for getting "*Gurmukhi Vidya*" (direct learning from teacher's contact. So inner soul of this fair embraces education, art and beauty.

Creation of permanent fund which was main objective of the fair that fund has now become treasure of Lakshmi (Goddess of Wealth). The welfare capability of this fund has made the students of the Kalavaban feel secured. Students can borrow from the fund if needed. Poor students can get help to run their studies. There are plans to provide scholarships to talented students and arranging art exhibitions outside Santiniketan – the required expenditure will be incurred from this fund. Like this, Students and Professors are having many developmental plans.

Convocation

Convocation is mainly programme for bestowal of recognition for success. The successful students in examination of Viswa Bharati are awarded *Abhigyan Patra* and the same is presented to the student in the Convocation ceremony.

It is noteworthy, which we are not unaware of that, Rabindranath was not much trustful in the system of examinations, degrees, diplomas etc. For

this reason, in the first phase of the Santiniketan Ashram, poet kept the students away from examination system and involved in education of making good human being in the liberal natural environment.

Pramathnath Bishi, the first student of Santiniketan commented- *"At that time, the same boy in Santiniketan was able to study in higher or lower class according to the disparity of education; ... a child may be in seventh grade in Bangla-English, he is the eighth grade in mathematics."* Needless to say, this style does not last forever. According to the need and pressure of different incidences later on poet has to accept prevailing education system i.e. examination etc.

Convocation ceremony started in Visva-Bharati. The annual convocation of Visva-Bharati use to be held with Paush festival (Poush Mela) at Amrakunj in Santiniketan. On the second day of the Paush Mela i.e. 8th Paush, at eight o'clock in the morning in presence of many invited honourable guests and uninvited mass gatherings, at the end of recitation of Vedic Mantra begins in the convocation ceremony. In the meeting, from the speeches of Chancellor, Vice-Chancellor and the chief guest, full of knowledge and wisdom, many achievement and work of the Visva-Bharati are unfolded. After delivery of the Acharya's advice and blessings, with the Postgraduate Certificate or Avigyan Patra a piece of *Chhatim* (ছাতিম) leaf and Saptaparni (সপ্তপর্ণী) leaf are given as symbol of peace and harmony.

Many may know the reason and history for giving leaf of Saptaparni tree (Devils Tree). 'Olympic Games' began in the Golden Age of Greek civilization in Homer's Country Greece. If one wins in Olympic Games, with the medal a beautiful bunch was given decorated with olive leaves. It is possible that, in view of this practice, giving Saptaparni (সপ্তপর্ণী) leaf with the certificate of Visva-Bharati graduates was introduced. But we think more important mysterious reason is hidden in the leaves of Saptaparni tree. The initial motivation of Maharshi Debendranath to establish Santiniketan was 'Chhatima Tala' (ছাতিমতলা). Two Satparni Tree standing in the infinite darkness gave him rest and comfort of mind. In Rabindranath's words, *"When my father was returning, after attending invitation, from Bhuban Sinha's house in Raipur, he felt attracted to these two trees in the middle of the field. In search of peace he accepted this land as donation from Sinha's of Raipur."*

In 1952, the convocation of the Visva-Bharati Society was held in

Amrakunj gorgeously. Sarbapalli Radhakrishnan preceded over the ceremony. In his speech in the context of giving advice to the new graduates he said, "Just now what Pandit Khsitimohan Sen spelt out towards you *"Sattyanna Pramaditbyam"*, *"Dharmanna Pramaditbyam"*, *"Kushalanna Pramaditbyam"* after that I think I don't have to say anything."

In the Visva-Bharati's convocation, prominent personalities of the country and abroad use to be present as special guests. Not only Rajendra Prasad, Radhakrishnan – prominent leaders of the country like Sarojini Naidu, Jawaharlal Nehru, Abul Kalam Azad, Lal Bahadur Shastri, Indira Gandhi and others have expressed their impressive views on in the convocation ceremony. At the ceremony, not only the political personalities; artists and poets, literary personalities, scientists, philosophers also accepted the invitation for convocation, and rendered immense respect to the organization of Rabindranath, in Amrakunja's Chayabithi. In particular, note that Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru has repeatedly arrived at Amrakunja in Poushmela. He attended not only as the Prime Minister of the country, but also present in the playground like ordinary people. Sometime he reached school and ate sitting with everyone. In the same way he mixed with the kids and played with them. In one word he became part of Santiniketan. He alone use to amused the environment

Festivals promote equality in diversity, brings neighbours into congregation of happiness. Festivals endorse cultural exchanges and improve society's general psychological wellbeing. Rabindranath Tagore is one who realized that social alliance can be the inner strength of the progression of humanity. Tagore always wanted to encourage the creative self of person. According to him, the very notion of creativity is the "surplus" for our divine soul which connects one to the world. The consciousness of our personality reveals as mass awareness and reflects prominently distinct with the colour of our emotions. Rabindranath Tagore proposed whole lot various types of festivals capturing multiplicities and diversities of creation. As an unprejudiced person, Tagore valued all aspects of human creation through festivals. Conventionally, festivals are community specific, always celebrated by communities to practice ritualistic or religious activities. But Tagore's understanding of festival speaks a different tale of our life. He encourages creativity as well as its application. In every aspect of Tagore's philosophy, abstraction and concreteness set out hand to hand.

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